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Description of the nest and eggs of the Mountain Illadopsis Trichastoma pyrrhopterum

The Mountain Illadopsis Trichastoma pyrrhopterum occurs in medium altitude and montane forests (1550–2800 m) in central and western Kenya, eastern and south-western Uganda, western Tanzania, and eastern Zaïre (Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1960, 1973, Britton 1980). Although Brown & Britton (1980) indicate two East African breeding records for this species, these are apparently based upon indirect evidence of breeding (e.g., birds carrying nest materials, adults feeding fledglings, enlarged gonads). Chapin (1953) mentioned that the nesting habits were unknown although he gives a record of a juvenile some two weeks out of the nest west of Uvira, Kivu (3°24S, 29°08E) on 17 July. We believe the following to be the first description of the nest and egg of this species.

On 3 February 1989 we found a Mountain Illadopsis nest at 2100 m altitude in the Impenetrable (Bwindi) Forest of south-western Uganda (0°03S, 29°47E). The nest was located 1 m from a little-used footpath in montane forest. It was 1.4 m above the ground on top of a ledge that was covered with dead leaves and dense vegetation. The site was in heavy shade on a steep slope about 15 m above a small stream. An open area densely covered with *Mimulopsis solmsii* and *Sericostachys tomentosa* was 3 m from the nest, between the nest and the stream. Dominant trees in the area were *Strombosia scheffleri*, *Chrysophyllum gorgungosanum*, *Tabbernaemontana holstii*, *Symphonia globulifera*, *Myrianthus arboreus* and *Fagara* sp. The tree canopy reached to about 38 m.

The cup-shaped nest was embedded 5 cm into dead, dry leaves which overlaid about 10 cm of damp, decaying leaves on top of the ledge. The outer cup was about 50 per cent green moss. This was interwoven with dry tree leaves and the dry leaves and stems of herbs. The outside diameter and depth of the nest were 10 cm and 4 cm, respectively. The cup of the nest was 5 cm in diameter, 2 cm deep, and thinly lined with dry rootlets and moss. Fern leaves, and dead tree leaves caught in the base of the fern, hung over the nest. The nest was kept from sliding off the ledge by the depression in the leaves and by a small sapling. It was extremely well hidden, camouflaged, and protected from hail and rain.

Two eggs were present ($17 \times 20 \text{ mm}$ and $17 \times 23 \text{ mm}$). Each was very pale blue-green with brown and purplish-brown splashing covering about 10 per cent of the surface, being denser at the large end.

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When the nest was next visited on 25 February we found that it had been pulled 12 cm from its original location and it was empty. Almost certainly it had been raided by a predator. We collected the nest for deposit in the National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi.

Nests and eggs are described for four other members of the genus *Trichastoma* (*T. albipectus, T. cleaveri, T. fulvescens, T. rufipennis*) (Chapin 1953, Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1960, 1973, Butynski 1989). All have nests which are loose, shallow cups of dead, often damp and decaying, leaves. The nest of *T. pyrrhopterum* differs in being a substantial, sturdy structure made primarily of green moss. The size and number of eggs in a clutch (two) are as reported for the other four species. The eggs differ, however, in that they are not primarily white, whitish or pinkish-white, but rather very pale blue-green.

The three breeding records for *T. pyrrhopterum* in East Africa show it breeding in Uganda during February (this record) and May (two records in Brown & Britton 1980). Combining the present record with those in Butynski (1989) we find that, of 26 breeding records for this genus in East Africa, 25 of the 26 are for the seven months from November to May. Although the present record for *T. pyrrhopterum* is for the middle of the region's minor dry season, most records for the genus are during the second half of the two wet seasons, i.e., November–December and April–May.

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First nest record for the Equatorial Akalat Sheppardia aequatorialis The Equatorial Akalat Sheppardia aequatorialis is a shy, little known bird of the dense undergrowth of mid altitude and montane forests in western Kenya, south-western Uganda, southern Sudan and eastern Zaïre. Chapin (1953), Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960, 1973) and Brown & Britton (1980) had no breeding records for this species although breeding is recorded in January, April and November from the Imatong Mts by Nikolaus (1987).